

Department of Veterans Affairs

Under Secretary for Health

Veterans Health Administration

Washington, DC 20420

April 29, 1994

MEMORANDUM

NO. 10-94-003

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THERAPEUTIC AGENTS

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this Memorandum is to restate the functions of the Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents and designate its membership. This Memorandum replaces Memorandum 10-92-004.

2. POLICY: It is the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to treat all patients with the safest and most effective therapeutic agents, at the most favorable price. This requires a continuing review of drug utilization and prescribing practices by the Pharmacy and Therapeutic Agents Committee at each Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center. The long standing policy of not rigidly restricting professional practice by administrative direction is not changed. Consideration must also be given to fluctuating prices of drugs as patents expire and/or competitive marketing makes price advantages available. The purchase of high cost drugs cannot be justified when equally safe and effective, but less expensive, preparations are available, except under unusual circumstances. Generic drug procurement is VA policy.

3. ACTION

a. To implement this policy, the Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents is established in VA Central Office and will:

(1) Serve in an advisory capacity to the Under Secretary for Health on policy pertaining to the use, control and cost containment of drugs and pharmaceuticals.

(2) Develop, recommend and disseminate information on safe, effective and rational use of drugs in accordance with the Under Secretary for Health's policy.

(3) Develop and approve drug treatment guidelines.

(4) Conduct studies on drug utilization patterns for medical centers.

(5) Review the actions of other committees in VA Central Office dealing with drugs; e.g., Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Ad Hoc Therapeutics Advisory Committee, etc.

(6) Receive and evaluate the summary of serious adverse drug events provided by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

(7) On behalf of VA facilities, collate, analyze, and trend national data for use by local facilities in their monitoring and evaluation activities.

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(8) Review and act on quality improvement reports submitted by VA medical centers and clinics which indicate dissatisfaction with the quality of drug products. Information will be coordinated through the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) when appropriate and directly, when needed, with the officials of the FDA, United States Pharmacopeia, National Formulary, and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

(9) Provide membership as duly appointed intra-government representatives of the Departments, Agencies, and Offices of the Federal Government engaged in the procurement, regulations, or use of drugs.

(10) Review proposed marketing center actions of drug items; recommend appropriate action to the OA&MM regarding item entry and deletion of depot standard items; and certify the need for item entry to VA depot by signature on VA Form 10-2063, Marketing Action.

(11) Perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Under Secretary for Health.

b. The Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents

(1) The Committee is composed of the following:

Associate Deputy Chief Medical Director (ADCMD)

for Clinical Programs
Chairperson
(111)

Assistant Chief Medical Director (ACMD) for Dentistry
Member
(113)

ACMD for Geriatrics and Extended Care
Member
(114)

ACMD for Nursing Programs
Member
(118)

ACMD for Environmental Medicine and
Public Health
Member
(116)

Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for OA&MM

Member
(90)

DADCMD for Ambulatory Care
Member
(112)

Director, Medical Service
Member
(111A)

Director, Mental Health and Behavioral
Sciences Service
Member
(111C)

Director, Pharmacy Service
Member
(111H)

Director, Surgical Service
Member
(111B)

Chief, Clinical Pharmacy/Quality Management
Secretary/Member
(111H)

(2) Each member will not further delegate this responsibility. Members will designate an alternate to serve in the case of absence, and only during that absence.

(3) Other service directors and specialists will be invited to participate in meetings as required.

(4) The Committee will meet quarterly and at other times as necessary at the call of the Chairperson. Notification of meetings will be sent to the members at least 2 weeks prior to each meeting.

(5) The Secretary is authorized to coordinate actions not requiring attention by the Committee as a whole.

c. Questions concerning these guidelines should be directed to John E. Ogden, Director, Pharmacy Service, or Louise Rodriguez, FTS 535-7302.

4. REFERENCES: None.

5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Deputy Associate Deputy CMD for Hospital Based Services (111H).

6. RESCISSIONS: CMD Memorandum 10-92-004, dated March 6, 1992 is rescinded. This Under Secretary for Health memorandum will expire April 29, 1997.

Signed 4/29/94 Dennis Smith for

John T. Farrar, M.D.

Acting Under Secretary for Health

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